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Quality of life in patients with gastroesophageal reflux disease: a systematic analysis

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Introduction: The World Health Organization defines quality of life (QOL) as the perception of the individual in relation to his position in life in the context of the culture and value system in which he lives and in relation to his goals, expectations, standard of living, interests and concerns. It can be treated by different perspectives, ranging from understanding fundamental, spiritual and even material needs. In addition, QOL is closely linked to health and may be affected by functional limitations, which may be caused by chronic disorders. Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is an example of these chronic disorders, whose main symptoms are heartburn and regurgitation. This condition occurs as a result of irritation in the esophageal mucosa caused by retrograde movement of gastric contents and although preventable, complications are common and range from erosions to neoplastic conditions. Therefore, it is a relevant theme for public health given its high prevalence and its influence on society.

Objective: To assess whether there is an impact on the quality of life of a group of GERD patients.

Methodology: After approval by the local Ethics Committee, a sample of 50 patients was selected at Hospital Electro Bonini (Ribeirão Preto, SP). Survey participants voluntarily answered the QS-GERD and SF-36 questionnaires (instrument for assessing QOL in relation to health). Twenty-five participants were excluded from the study because they had comorbidities.

Results: In the sample analyzed, 64% were female, 76% white, with an average age of 47 years. GERD was present in 36% of those selected, and of these 56% had regurgitation, 67% were symptomatic and 22% had regular follow-up with a gastroenterologist. SF36 analysis revealed the following average scores: Physical Limit 58.3; Mental Health 62.9; Emotional Limitation 62.1; General Health 64.5.

Discussion and conclusion of results: The values of the SF-36 domains range from 0 to 100 and the closer to the maximum score the better the perception of that domain. The results suggest that GERD has some impact on the QOL of these patients, however, less than a quarter had regular medical follow-up. Moreover, these are partial results and further studies are needed.

Keywords: Quality of life; GERD; Gastroesophageal reflux disease; SF-36.